

Bancroft councillor resigns, says he's not finished with politics



Bancroft Councillor Bill Kilpatrick tears up as he announces his resignation to the public. / SARAH SOBANSKI Staff

By Sarah Sobanski

Bancroft Councillor Bill Kilpatrick has resigned from council.

Kilpatrick hosted a rally at A Place for the Arts March 17 to announce he had submitted his letter of resignation to Bancroft Mayor Paul Jenkins earlier that day.

Kilpatrick said he could no longer keep the promise he had made to his constituents as a member of council.

"In order to keep my promise to you, I feel I have no choice but to resign as a councillor for the Town of Bancroft," Kilpatrick said first. He was moved to tears as he continued.

"This does not mean that I am finished with politics. It means I will be serving our community in other ways," he said.

At a council meeting March 13, the town announced it would be hiring integrity commissioner Nigel Bellchamber to investigate a code of conduct complaint against Kilpatrick.

Kilpatrick has been on sick leave from council. Deputy clerk Lianne Sauter told *Bancroft This Week* that Bellchamber had agreed to be as expedient as he could before Kilpatrick's resignation, although no formal timeline was set.

At the rally, Kilpatrick said he had filed his own complaint in November 2017.

"I believe that this charge against me is a petty retaliation for the complaint that I filed in an attempt to silence me and by extension, silence you, the constituents. I refuse to continue to be a scapegoat for the province or the bureaucracy."

In these instances of attempted silencing of an issue in the workplace, many would reach out to a [whistleblower lawyer](#) to assist them moving forwards. Kilpatrick's situation is different, however.

According to a March 20 press release by the town, "a workplace investigation involving complaints, counter complaints and grievances between Councillor Kilpatrick and staff members" is ongoing from last November. The town said the process is confidential to protect staff privacy and that council doesn't "control these investigative processes which are dictated by legislation," it "only participates."

Jenkins confirmed March 19 he had received Kilpatrick's resignation. The town's release said it didn't know if Kilpatrick's resignation would impact the ongoing investigation.

"I would like to thank Councillor Kilpatrick for his service to the town especially his efforts on the Water/Wastewater Advisory Committee," said Jenkins. "Councillor Kilpatrick was also a strong social advocate and brought many issues related to this to the council table. We wish Councillor Kilpatrick the best in his future endeavours."

Kilpatrick told the full gallery Saturday, that many people, including those gathered, had asked him to stay on council. But, he said, things had become "so personal" on council following his decision to remain at the council table during a January meeting at Club 580.

At that meeting, protesters of the town's increased water and sewer rates ignored council process during a closed session and

approached the council table.

Councillors at the meeting besides Kilpatrick proceeded to a locked room at the back of the building. Jenkins has said he instructed council to move there as he had concerns for members' safety.

"I don't see how I'll be able to effectively or efficiently do my job for you. I don't think it will be productive to spend the next seven months defending myself from allegations every time I disagree with a decision or the direction of council," said Kilpatrick.

He said he didn't want to see the town spend money on legal fees to proceed with the complaint against him. He said he'd like to see that money "spent on other things."

He added he hadn't come to the decision to resign easily, but had to consider the "compounded" toll of being on council was having on he and his family.

A second March 20 press release by the town said Kilpatrick's resignation letter would be read at council's April 10 meeting, or sooner if a special meeting was called. It said his seat will most likely be filled by appointment with the upcoming municipal election so close.

With files from Jim Eadie

UPDATE: This story was updated March 22 to include comments for Bancroft Mayor Paul Jenkins and the Town of Bancroft.